Hickling-Hudson, Anne (2003) Multicultural Education and the Postcolonial Turn. Policy Futures in Education 1(2):381 -401.

Multicultural Education and the Postcolonial Turn.

Anne Hickling Hudson
Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Policy Futures in Education, Vol 1 No. 2, pp. 381 – 401.

Introduction: Postcolonial rethinking

The assumptions which the educational system inherited from the era of European colonialism, and modified during the era of decolonisation, are currently facing postcolonial challenges. In this paper, I consider how multicultural education and postcolonial rethinking might lead educators and students to change traditional school contexts and curricula. The issues that I discuss focus on Australia, but also apply more broadly to countries with culturally diverse populations.

Why choose multiculturalism as the focus of my paper, and why postcolonialism as an approach for analysing it? To start with multiculturalism, I want to draw attention to the conceptual map of emphases in multicultural research and teaching proposed by Bennett (2001: 175), which includes four 'genre clusters': curriculum reform, equity pedagogy, multicultural competence and societal equity. This comprehensive approach provides a culturally embedded vision for improving pedagogies. Across such genre clusters, multicultural education has provided a clear alternative to monocultural discourses of education. Moving from such oppressive discourses, it can inspire education that opens doors to exciting developments in knowledge and insights, although researchers have suggested that policies at the official level use multicultural education as a palliative rather than for social change (Sachs and Poole, 1989). As a field, multicultural education has room for improvement when it becomes broadened by specific postcolonial perspectives. Multicultural pedagogies informed by postcolonialism can fashion intellectual and attitudinal tools to help redress the cultural inequities that deepen social injustices.

Postcolonial theory provides a framework which helps to address questions of why so many curriculum practices appear still so far away from reaching or even recognising the goals of socio-cultural equity in Bennett's conceptual map. This is a starting point for working out strategies of change. The framework highlights an appreciation of the powerful effects which European and later North American global dominance through colonialism and imperialism had on learning and education. Some object to developments in postcolonial theory on grounds that we should not be defining our current experiences in relation to a system that has long gone. But as Willinsky (1998) points out, the educational legacies of imperialism live on strongly within us and within our institutions. For example, we continue to place boundaries around human groups by the idea of 'culture' which, with its 19th century roots, carries within it the residues of beliefs about race and nation which so benefited the Europeans (Willinsky 1999). Most people don't consider themselves racist, yet still believe in the discredited 18th century ideas that humans are biologically divided into 'races' such as Caucasian, Negro, Malay and Mongol, and that there is some inherent overlap between race and culture. 'None of us lives untouched by colonisation, the extraordinary ordinariness of whiteness, the cultural constructions of Other, or as part of an insulated and isolated island mass' (Crowley 1999). We continue putting our children for the whole of their childhood and adolescence into schools organised along 19th century lines of age-grading, subject fragmentation and psychological manipulation. We continue to require students to specialise in Western modes of knowledge and give them little or no opportunity to explore alternative epistemologies (see

Hickling-Hudson 2002, in press). In other words, discourses of neo-colonialism are extremely deep-rooted and difficult to change. Since these legacies live on, it is appropriate that "Postcolonial critique focuses on forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world: the politics of anti-colonialism and neo-colonialism, race, gender, nationalisms, class and ethnicities define its terrain" (Young 2001, p. 11). While other perspectives also challenge oppressive traditions, postcolonial theory systematises the challenge in a framework that takes into account the strength of neo-colonial formations. It gives us a hybrid conceptual language, drawing on discourse theory as well as vocabularies of social justice, for analysing the ambiguities and ambivalence of change, recognising the epistemologies which underlie our practices. 'Postcolonialising' involves us in developing identities and strategies that help to leave constricting neo-colonial ideas and practices behind.

In most societies, schooling is very deeply influenced by contesting discourses of cultural diversity, which embody both neo-colonial and decolonising histories. My paper considers these discourses as sites of interrogation in schooling in Australia, as an example of a society which is multicultural but predominantly 'white'. It briefly outlines the characteristics of cultural diversity in Australia, and it considers school cultures in terms of their development along a continuum. The proposition is that at one end of the continuum is the model of what I refer to as the *culturally problematic school* – one in which there is a predominance of unexamined practices of ethnocentrism and racism which cause problems in the school community. Schools, however, are continually absorbing changes in their cultural policies. These can move them further along the continuum towards culturally progressive academic and social practices characterising what I call the *interculturally proactive school*. I look at some of the signs that multicultural education in the proactive school may be evolving in a postcolonial way, suggesting that postcolonial perspectives would have significant implications for challenging and changing the traditional culture of schools and colleges.

Multicultural contexts

In the predominantly 'white' societies of the European diaspora in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, that have both practised colonialism and have been shaped by it, populations are inevitably characterised by immense cultural diversity. They consist of indigenous people and of the descendants of the Europeans who displaced and dispossessed indigenous people in the colonial adventure. They also consist of waves of migrants from all over the globe, who augmented this population of the European invaders and settlers. 'Australia has a population of just over eighteen million, of whom four million were born overseas…. In the last 50 years, over five million people have migrated to Australia' (Partington 2001: 184). People descended from British migrants still today make up about 70 percent of the population of 18 million. Another 20 percent consists of migrants from northern, southern and eastern Europe. About eight percent are 'Asians' and 'others', and indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise two percent. These broad categories can be further categorised into over 100 ethnic groups, which speak about 80 languages between them (see Jupp quoted by Megalogenis, 2002). An ethnic profile of a nation is, of course, a very incomplete social map. Ethnic groups are usually inter-ethnic through intermarriage and interaction, and are diverse in many respects including wealth and poverty, youth and age, urban and rural, all of which have to be recognised in social analysis.

The Australian Federal government has identified specific dimensions of multicultural policy, and education is expected to help students develop all of these. They include civic duty (the obligation to support the Australian constitution and democratic institutions), cultural respect, social equity and 'productive diversity', the maximising of the cultural and socio-economic benefits which arise from the diversity of the population (National Multicultural Advisory Council, 1999, pp.9-10). These official statements of multiculturalism mask an uneasy ambivalence in Australia's personality. On one hand, up to about 100,000 migrants a year are allowed entry (they have to meet stringent selection criteria which favours the young, the skilled and the well-educated, especially those fluent in English), and there is a quota for

refugees. On the other hand, some show a fear that the society is being flooded by 'Asians', and hostile paranoia against the unfortunate asylum seekers who seek refuge in Australia's shores. These contesting discourses are commented on by Sheridan (2002: 10-11) who observes: 'Most migrants still find Australia a welcoming place. Most of us still rejoice in our diversity. At the same time, we practise systematic cruelty against the most vulnerable people in our care, and this cruelty excites warm electoral support'. It is this coexistence of outward-looking multiculturalism and Anglophile xenophobia which leads some to praise Australia for having one of the most successful and tolerant multicultural societies in the world, and others to criticise it for its hostile treatment of some ethnic groups (see Smolizc 1997, Arnold 1997).

Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, about 2 percent of the population of 18 million, resist being treated as just another culture in the multicultural model of Australian society. They assert their right to be regarded as a special group in Australia – not just one of the many minority cultures, but the only group that developed within the Australian continent. Their shaping of the continent's environment and social relations and expressive culture for at least 60,000 years – long before Europe was even conceptualised – represents a dynamic cultural legacy that is of immense importance to modern Australia. Yet, the history of invasion and settlement with its racist colonialism so savagely excluded and marginalised indigenous people that they still suffer deeply. They have the highest levels of unemployment in the society (23 percent compared to a 9 percent average - AusStats 1999a), and a much greater burden of ill-health and social dislocation than the rest of the population. Many Indigenous people are successfully seizing the spaces in modern political culture to strive for improving the material and social conditions of their communities. 'Reconciliation' is the public slogan which sets out the ideal that Indigenous and White Australians should work together to overcome the divisions of the past, while 'multiculturalism' is the slogan that aims at achieving overall intercultural diversity within a framework of shared values.

In societies as culturally diverse as Australia, schools as sites for analysis provide at least three types of ethnic profile. Some schools have a preponderance of indigenous students, others have a multicultural mix of ethnic groups including white ethnicities, and some have a preponderance of students of British and European descent. Whatever the ethnic profile of the school, there is an official requirement that the curriculum should be multicultural, to prepare students for living in a multicultural society and a globalising world. But how is 'multicultural' to be understood, given the contesting discourses of ethnicity characterising this complex diversity of cultures? There is the discourse of White Australia, proud of its achievements in creating a European-derived modern society in the Asia-Pacific region, and defending itself against what it sees as increasing threats that this achievement might be displaced by 'alien' traditions. As Singh (2000:115) points out, 'In Australia Whiteness plus nationality are still (mis)taken by some to equal Australianness'. There is the discourse of 'Cosmopolitics' which sees Australia as an exciting mixture of cultural diversity which enriches the entire society (see Singh, *Teacher Learning Network*), and which promotes the idea of 'thinking and feeling beyond the nation' (Cheah and Robbins 1998). There is Indigenous discourse, which claims the special place of Indigenous culture in making Australia utterly unique, and struggles for both cultural recognition and socio-economic equity. These discourses are evident in the structure and curriculum of Australian schools.

The culturally problematic school

Official policy of the Commonwealth of Australia is multicultural, and this is given sincere emphasis in goals for education. But is hard to change the monocultural, ethnocentric tradition in schools. The kind of school which, from a postcolonial perspective, I see as 'culturally problematic' is one in which the school's culture uncritically reflects and perpetuates a narrow discourse of Anglo-Australian ethnicity. This approach caters in an ethnocentric way for Anglo-Australian students, and does emotional and intellectual violence by requiring students who are not 'Anglo' to assimilate into a cultural framework which actively disrespects them.

Such a situation was illustrated recently by media reports on the efforts of Aboriginal students to improve their educational prospects. Forty-three Aboriginal teenagers from a small, rural town, left their homes, with their parents' permission, to travel 1500km to a boarding school in a larger regional town. They hoped that they would receive a better and more sympathetic education there. According to the news report, the students complained that the state school in their home town was catering for them very poorly compared to the preferential treatment that it gave white students. On some occasions, black and white students were even punished in different and discriminatory ways. Although some of the school administrators when interviewed defended the school as providing the best education it could for indigenous as well as Anglo-Australian students, others told the interviewers that the students who were leaving perceived that they lacked a viable future in the home town. One school commentator was reported as saying that the children "would prefer to be educated, housed and fed in a school on the other side of the country than starve (in their home town)" (Toohey 2002, pp. 1-2, see also 'Four Corners' video, the ABC, 2002).

Perhaps these Aboriginal teenagers have good reason to be concerned about their educational chances in their rural home town. They would probably be well aware that the education system does not give indigenous peoples the same opportunities that it gives most other ethnic groups. This is immediately evident from looking at the figures that reveal the educational status of Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Educational statistics indicate that people who hold university degrees represent just over 25 percent of the adult population in Australia. But only 1.3 percent of indigenous Australians have degrees. Only 6.6 percent of indigenous Australians have successfully completed high school with a Year 12 qualification, compared to a national average of 70 percent (AustStats 1999b). Many drop out of school before the completion of Grade 10, the end of junior high school. Recently there has been an improvement in literacy levels among indigenous students: by 1999 about 66 % were meeting the standards set out for eight to nine-year old students in Year 3 (up from only 20% meeting the standards in 1996). But after Year 3, reading, writing and numeracy skills decline sharply, "to the point where many Indigenous students are often 3 to 4 year levels below other students and students leave school with the English literacy level of a six year old" (MCEETYA 2001). For the education system, this represents a serious structural problem which arguably is of its own making.

Why are indigenous Australians not gaining the same benefits from school as the average Australian population of students? From my experiences as a teacher educator in Australia, I would suggest that the answers are intricately bound up with the neo-colonial practices that influence interrelationships between school and society. From a postcolonial perspective, the discourses of ethnocentrism and anti-Indigenous hostility in traditional pedagogies, curricula and relationships assault Indigenous students by marginalising, humiliating and excluding them. Many react by 'turning off', as the indicators of low performance and high absenteeism suggest.

The education offered to Indigenous and other non-white ethnic minorities is shaped by institutional racism in several ways. The inadequate training and professional development of the teachers perpetuates the immersion of the students in an uncritically presented Eurocentric curriculum. The fact that most of the teachers are 'Anglo' illustrates the problem that too few people from Indigenous or ethnic minority cultures have been given the opportunity to train as teachers. Assessment systems show a high degree of culture bias (Luke et al 2002). In these culturally problematic schools, children from Indigenous and other non-Anglo backgrounds are expected to fit into the mainstream school culture, yet they are given little or no help in doing so. The study of languages other than English is inadequately provided for. The content of the school curriculum is shaped by Anglo-Australian perspectives and concerns. An Anglocentric conception of knowledge from Mathematics to Music is likely to perpetuate messages of white supremacy, in that 'other' cultural traditions and knowledges

are either rendered invisible or distorted, an approach which represents strong legacies of a colonial past. In such schools, nothing in the curriculum promotes learning that would help the students to understand the real history or current profile of Australia and the possibilities for improvements in the future. The performance of students disadvantaged by this kind of curriculum is likely to suffer. School failure can follow people throughout their lives, as is shown by the serious discrepancy in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school students and the low representation of indigenous people in high-status careers. The historical lack of effective policies from State Departments of Education underlies the continuation of the monocultural, neo-colonial character of many schools. The devastating effects of racism and ethnocentrism in schooling are discussed by many researchers including M. Singh (1995), Rizvi (1996), P. Singh (1997), Ninnes (2000), Partington (2001), Malin (1990), Heitmeyer 2001, and Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003, in press). On the basis of dissatisfaction with Eurocentric curricula and unjust assessment systems, some Aboriginal and Islander teachers are striving to put in place an alternative curriculum and pedagogy that more adequately meets the needs of indigenous students (Hart and Downie, 2000).

What characterises culturally problematic schooling, then, is that it carries out a wide range of discriminatory practices, which favour students from 'Anglo' backgrounds, and victimise students from non-white or non English-speaking backgrounds. The racism and ethnocentrism inherited from the colonial period are expressed through the curriculum, the assessment system and the library, in the tolerance of the inappropriate pedagogy and behaviour of some teachers, in the limited role given to parent and citizen associations, in the nature of extra-curricular activities, in the fear of many parents to intervene on behalf of their children. Students are likely to associate in their own cultural cliques, with very little intercultural interaction and sometimes with high levels of inter-group hostility. This hostility is expressed in racist taunts, insulting ethnic 'jokes' and bullying, but on occasions it can result in serious injury or the deaths of those being bullied (see Perera and Pugliese, 1998:164). Sometimes this kind of school attempts multicultural activities such as a day or a week devoted to festivals, but if these remain only token, they send a message that patronisingly and wrongly suggests the superficiality of non-Anglo cultures. Such schools are at the stage of practising a Eurocentric approach which not only takes Europe and its diasporas as the benchmark of global culture, but is also a vector for repugnant discourses of racism that diminish both perpetrators and victims.

The interculturally proactive school

The broad aims of Australian multicultural policy obviously apply to all Australians and not just ethnic minorities. Educators need to be clear about how the goals and practices of multicultural education apply to all students. Noble and Poynting (1999), in their article on multicultural education for intercultural understanding, relates to these issues in an Australian context. They start their analysis by a useful overview of the history of multicultural education policy in Australia and with comments on the issues involved. As they point out, multicultural education places a challenging set of demands on teachers. They have to learn to deal with the needs of children of diverse ethnicities, have to work out viable classroom management strategies, and have to design and teach an intercultural curriculum.

An 'interculturally proactive' school is one in which most teachers are constantly active in designing and implementing programs and strategies to promote intercultural understanding and inter-relationships. They would place the greatest importance on dialogue, negotiation and working together with parents and friends of the school. It would be one in which teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach inter-culturally, using approaches of critical education and sophisticated language teaching. It would be one in which the skills of parents are used to assist teachers, and one in which students have an opportunity to become multi-lingual, that is, fluent in English, retaining their mother tongue, and learning other languages. It would be one in which teachers are assisted to develop their intercultural skills through professional development programs, which is very important since many teachers have

received no suitable preparation in their degree programs.

Three useful strategies of successful intercultural schools are considered here, a strategy of community liaison, a strategy of critical socio-cultural study within the curriculum and a strategy of education in home languages.

(i)Community liaison.

The example of community liaison described was developed by an ethnically diverse Catholic girl's school in Sydney [Noble and Poynting (1999:73-75) citing research carried out by Kalantzis et al (1990)]. The school consisted of students who were mostly from poor families. Most of the students – ninety percent – were of non-English-speaking backgrounds. 36 ethnic groups were present, about half of which were Arabic speakers, and the rest from Italian, Vietnamese and other backgrounds. At first, the school's administrators and teachers tried to communicate with parent through the traditional Parents and Citizens Association, but they found that information about curriculum changes was not getting through to parents because only a few parents, mostly English-speaking, were attending the meetings. The school leaders decided to use a different strategy. They gave Arabic-speaking teachers time off teaching to visit students' homes and talk with their parents about the curriculum changes and other school matters. Families of other language backgrounds were then visited by a teacher who spoke those languages, or by an English-speaking teacher accompanied by an interpreter.

The teachers found that parents in their homes were willing to talk about many of the concerns that they had about their children's education. This strategy became the basis for language-specific meetings between parents and teachers at the school as soon as parents felt more comfortable about going there. The language-based meetings proved to be a very valuable means of parent-teacher dialogue. Parents were familiarised with a range of school and government programs, and teachers listened to the concerns of parents. Some curriculum and timetable changes were made at the school as a result of parents' suggestions. This community liaison program was adopted by some other schools because of its usefulness as a process of exchanging information and negotiating change. What was outstanding about it was its success in changing the process from one exhorting 'cultural sensitivity', which bids teachers to be 'aware' of ethnic minority needs, to one incorporating a more equitable, dialogic intercultural communication in which parents from a non-English-speaking background have a voice (Noble and Poynting p.75).

(iii)Socio-cultural programs.

Noble and Poynting (1999: 76-77) describe The Social Literacy Project, a curriculum developed as a way of challenging the inadequate approach of schools which incorrectly believe they are promoting multicultural education by having 'multicultural days' which celebrate exotic food, dance and costume. The Social Literacy Project, implemented in some schools in New South Wales, provided a structured, comprehensive Social Sciences program for Years 4 – 12. It follows an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on the skills of history, geography, sociology, commerce and language education. As the authors observe

> "the skills being developed here are those of a critical social literacy, which examines the structures and meanings of Western society, rather than assimilating students into an 'Australian way of life'. 'Participation' here also means the ability to challenge and change. Further, in drawing on Western as well as non-Western societies, Social Literacy embraces a fuller sense of diversity than mere celebration of difference allows, because it embraces a critical understanding" (pp. 76-77).

iii) *Education in and through home languages*

In some interculturally proactive schools, emphasis is put on promoting learning through community language programs. For example, the Tempe High School, a state high school in Sydney, developed a language policy and program which immensely improved the

performance of its culturally diverse student body. The school hired teachers to teach in at least six of the languages of the students – Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Greek, Italian and French. Student studied their home languages, literature and history, and they also studied the Anglo-Australian curriculum, assisted by teachers who could explain it to them in their home languages. Before this experiment, most students had been failing state tests and examinations, but after a few years of the program, student performance met and in some cases exceeded the State average (Cockburn 1994, SBS-TV videorecording).

These examples of community liaison, critical socio-cultural education and in-depth language education represent the kinds of practices which move schools towards an interculturally proactive philosophy and action which puts schooling on the road of decolonisation. Another practice that should be added is attention to the emotional intelligence and social skills of students, which could contribute to their ability to negotiate and solve day-to-day cultural conflicts. The question is how to reorganise the education system so that teachers would as a matter of course incorporate these elements of high-quality intercultural education in their practice, and indeed go beyond them to address even more difficult postcolonial challenges such as changing the very form and nature of the traditional school.

Taking a postcolonial turn.

It is clear that it will not be easy for the Eurocentric, culturally problematic school to transform itself into an interculturally proactive school which systematically promotes cultural diversity in its curriculum and social programs. There will need to be a great deal of help from the state departments of education and the universities. In Australia, this help is often provided, with programs of financial assistance for the special needs of minority groups and curriculum development advice. This is sound policy, but at the same time, we need to ask: is transformation into an intercultural school enough? From a postcolonial perspective I argue that even if an intercultural philosophy is embedded in the school culture, the school might still be operating in a constrained way that limits the intelligence and creativity of students with subject-divided timetables, rigid age grading, gender divisions and other hierarchies.

Schools arguably need to have a vision of the future that will prepare students and teachers for the changes of a globalising era. Exploring and developing new paradigms of educational change will be more likely to tackle both cultural and economic problems than the old paradigms of nineteenth century education. A postcolonial view of the school as it currently exists would see it as an outdated European institution in many ways, including the way in which it promotes a curriculum steeped in the ethnocentric assumption that the West is best when it comes to knowledge. It would recognise that the postmodern era is making this traditional education system obsolete and old educational institutions dysfunctional, as Aviram (1996) argues.

The most fundamental aspects of education are being challenged by postmodern and postcolonial thinking and circumstances. There is a recognition that the traditional school almost inevitably promotes and reinforces socio-economic inequity (Hickling-Hudson 2002, Ladwig 2000). Furthermore, traditional bioregimes of schooling are unsuitable to the extent that they drill the bodies of students into a regimented and stultified approach to learning through rigid timetables and stages predetermined by the academic curriculum (Tait 2000). Many scholars have shown that traditional curriculum content is seriously flawed (Ninnes 2001) and is regarded by many as increasingly irrelevant. The sexist nature of the school is criticised (Taylor 2000), and its social class divisions are also criticised (Henry 2000). Methods based on books and writing have to compete with a range of modes of electronic communication, and educational organisations need no longer be hierarchical or spatially fixed. The distinction between childhood and adulthood is less sharp, and traditional aims are under question. Individualism and competitiveness are being challenged as destructive to the collective team work and cooperative ethos necessary to bring about sustainable development.

There is increasing recognition that the 'good life' cannot be based on unbridled consumerism, gender antagonisms and social irresponsibility (Ellyard 1999).

Postcolonial educators argue that it is vitally necessary to teach students to critique and think beyond the old modernist categories of culture, race and nation. As Willinsky (1999:101) observes, 'The schools…have worked so hard at helping the young imagine themselves within a world of nations, cultures and races, they now need to afford the young a place to stand apart from this legacy of divisions and boundaries'. In a globalising future, we are likely to become less and less confined within these constructed and limiting boundaries. A postcolonial perspective in the educational curriculum would be both analytical and activist in challenging preconceived boundaries. It would help students to learn how to identify the prejudices, divisions and hierarchies of the colonialist /imperialist legacy and how these have come to be the foundations of the continuing and deepening inequalities in globalisation (Hickling-Hudson 2002). It would encourage them to utilise and contribute to the positive trends as part of their education, for example, by becoming involved in transglobal movements or agencies that promote social justice (Hickling-Hudson 1999). Postcolonial educators advocate "reworking multiculturalism for Christianity's next millennium so that it encompasses concerns about globalisation, and offers some insights into the changing role of international corporations, the changing patterns of migration, and the influence of the new global reality on identity formation" (Singh 2000: 121).

New Curriculum Models

Flowing out of the postcolonial critique of schooling is the question: how can teachers move schools out of their Eurocentric mould and into a more equitable and challenging paradigm?

An example of a guiding framework currently being developed to help teachers reframe education is that based on research commissioned by 'Education Queensland', the Department of Education of the Australian state of Queensland. In the Queensland Longitudinal Research Study (QRLS) a team of researchers studied 24 schools to find out what pedagogies make a difference to students in terms of social justice (Lingard, Mills and Hayes, 2000: 103). Based on their research, the team developed a model of 'Productive Pedagogies' composed of four dimensions: intellectual quality, connectedness to the world, supportive classroom environments and the recognition of differences. The research suggested that high quality pedagogies in these dimensions produce strong student outcomes. 'Education Queensland' (the Queensland State Department of Education) is using this research to develop policy and strategies which will give students, teachers and communities a more promising opportunity to be intercultural and future-oriented than past curricular models did. The new program of curriculum reforms has three aspects: 'New Basics' (what is taught), 'Productive Pedagogies' (how it is taught) and 'Rich Tasks' (how kids show it) (see Education Queensland 2002). It incorporates concepts of education for a productive, inter-cultural future with the innovations and creative thinking of local teachers and significant links with the communities from which students come. It aims to restructure the curriculum around four new interdisciplinary areas of learning:

- life pathways and social futures
- multiliteracies, numeracies and communications media
- active citizenship
- environments and technologies (Luke 1999).

The positive effect of a sustained dialogue between research and practice is well illustrated in the action of the State Department of Education to utilise this research to frame a new model of teaching which schools in search of improvement can choose to adopt. Several schools have chosen to be pilots in applying this new model to their educational practices. Teachers seeking to adopt the 'Productive Pedagogies' model can turn for practical guidance and ideas to the *Classroom Reflection Manual* developed by Education Queensland's Curriculum Implementation Unit (2002), which based it on the QRLS research. I am particularly

interested in the advice given in the manual about good practice that could help teachers improve their skills in intercultural education. Three examples are selected here:

> *Example 1.* The manual encourages teachers to help students pursue knowledge in depth, and to see that it is not static but often problematic and always socially constructed and open to question. The example of good practice is that of a Year 7 class (aged twelve to thirteen) engaged in collaborative discussion about what it means to be an Australian. The students were given a range of texts presenting contrasting positions, including poetry from both Anglo Australian and indigenous Australian viewpoints, and the words of the national anthem. The students discussed the dominant messages in the texts and the linguistic features that supported these messages. They were asked to provide feedback on whose interests were served and whose interests marginalised by the different texts (p. 6)
>
> *Example 2*. The manual suggests that teachers use a narrative approach as much as possible in teaching. They are encouraged to help students identify the forms and features of narrative (such as personal stories, biographies, literary texts) as distinct from those of the expository approach (for example through non-fiction prose and scientific expression). The example of good practice is how a teacher in a Year 6 Social Science class dealt with the sensitive topic of racism in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, by drawing on his own experiences to illustrate how his views changed over time. He provided a vivid picture of the beliefs that he had absorbed as a child, and told the students how it was only with a visit to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander museum 'that he had come to understand the oppression that Indigenous people in his town had faced…. This narrative was a very powerful device for demonstrating the impact of racism on a child's interpretation of the world. It was clearly more powerful than an exposition would have been' (p. 17).
>
> *Example 3.* Active citizenship is an important attribute of productive pedagogies, and the manual asks teachers to promote in their students an active attitude to their democratic rights and responsibilities as global citizens. It gives the example of Year 7 students engaged in a unit of work considering the impact of poverty on societies across the globe. The focus was on food, and after studying the range of situations that contributes to serious food shortages and starvation, the students prepared a library presentation exploring the impact of poverty on children's lives in Australia and other parts of the world. They then made recommendations for school community involvement in Amnesty International and Community Aid Abroad (p.19).

These examples show that the manual is strong in its articulation of a theoretical framework of high-quality pedagogical approaches and examples that could enable teachers to reflect critically on their work, and to design curriculum and learning experiences that engage deep student interest. However, if the writers of the manual were to engage in further commitment to an intercultural philosophy of teaching, they would need to address the concern that it provides only five examples of specifically intercultural practice out of twenty four examples in all. Many teachers come from an educational background which devalues or ignores intercultural knowledge, and this suggests that the manual needs to be much more thoroughgoing in helping such teachers to achieve multicultural competence. The QRLS researchers point out that while most of the schools that they studied showed a high degree of supportiveness for students, the other three dimensions in the model of Productive Pedagogies, particularly 'recognition of difference', were relatively rare (Lingard, Mills and Hayes, 2000). My experience as a teacher educator endorses this. I have found that many teachers who want to practice inclusive and intercultural teaching felt that they simply did not have adequate skills, training and support to do so systematically. Arguably, the *Classroom Reflection Manual* could have taken a more proactive approach to all of the examples of good

practice by discussing the pedagogy that would be necessary to move curricula in an intercultural direction.

However, elements of the New Basics model have the potential of taking the education system in a postcolonial direction which promotes global understanding and orientations. As a curriculum responding to postcolonial times, 'it suggests sites of interrogation that mobilise subjectivities and identities, narratives and experience, contradiction and unevenness – a challenge to a chronology of bland conformity' (Crowley (1999: 107). Some of the 'Rich Tasks' that students are being asked to carry out to pursue their learning particularly show this promise. 'Rich Tasks' utilise the school's organisational capacity to help students do relevant work with intense intellectual engagement, which is necessary to improve learning outcomes. Teams of teachers and other educators designed these tasks for each school grade. I will quote some of the 'Rich Tasks' which in my view would be likely to stimulate deep intercultural engagement and learning.

Rich Tasks.

Year 3

Students create an interactive Web page and use it to communicate with students from other schools about themselves, their school and their community. They gather and organise information, present it in imaginative formats and respond in appropriate ways to questions and requests from other students.

Year 6

Students collect oral histories from older members of their own community and from people in different cultural groups. They prepare a multi-media presentation for a selected audience to show historical changes, for example concerning the changing nature of work.

Year 9

Students debate a range of issues, including ethical and moral questions, to do with emerging scientific advances in biotechnology. They prepare arguments to be used in public forums, make reasoned predictions, and prepare a plan for a world conference to be held five years hence, taking account of purpose, themes, presenters and audiences.

[Source: Education Queensland 2000]

If the global orientation suggested by these tasks could be sustained across the curriculum, drastic change to curricular approaches based on the traditional disciplines would become likely. Such a curriculum has the potential for taking the interculturally proactive school several steps further – making it a place that educates the young in 'the connections among post-cultural themes of the transnational, the hybrid and the local' (Willinsky 1999:105).

Australian Aboriginal epistemology provides equally important guidelines for educators as they struggle with the realization of the unsuitability of Eurocentric education and seek to reframe it. Educational knowledge can be unsettled and stretched by indigenous ways of thinking which challenge not only the curriculum, but the very shape and nature of the school.

An example of this is given by Michael Christie in an article entitled 'Galtha: the application of Aboriginal philosophy to school learning' (Christie 2000). This is a moving account of an educator's gradual understanding of Aboriginal epistemology and the effect it had on his role in Aboriginal education. An educator from New Zealand, Christie has been working for over thirty years as a scholar and writer and as a teacher linguist in schools in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory of Australia. He describes two different modes of educational change in an Aboriginal school, one guided by White and one guided by Indigenous educators. First, he outlines the long process by which White educators tried to design teaching and learning based on Western concepts for Aboriginal peoples in this part of Australia. What was missing from these attempts were acknowledgements that there were

already practices of literacy and mathematics within Aboriginal cultures, and that Western literacy and mathematics had their own specific preconceptions, ideas and pedagogies which were denying and devaluing Aboriginal learning. Even when the White educators tried to 'Aboriginalise' the school by encouraging the learning of local languages and translating books into these languages, they were far from understanding what Aboriginalisation should mean. They saw it as a process by which change had to happen to the Aboriginal teachers who work in schools, rather than to the schools in which they work (Christie 2000: 9).

Christie experienced a deeper level of Aboriginalisation of a school at Yirrkala under a new Aboriginal principal. The curriculum was being redesigned according to a 'both ways' philosophy 'where both western and Aboriginal viewpoints were to be heard, respected and presented alongside each other'. Yolgnu elders visited the school regularly to teach Yolgnu knowledge and philosophies of learning. Christie, gradually absorbing some understanding of these philosophies, came to see not only how powerful they were for learning, but also how vividly they revealed the arrogance of the white Australian imposition of a certain narrow type of schooling. As he explains it, the Yolgnu philosophy of education centers on the concepts of 'Ganma', 'Garma' and 'Galtha'.

Ganma. What happens in a 'both ways' learning situation (Aboriginal and Western) is to the elders akin to what they see happening in a 'Ganma', a lagoon within the mangroves where salt water coming in from the sea meets streams of fresh water coming down from the land. Each body of water has its own flows, and the lagoon is highly productive as a food source, just as each body of learning has its own logic and their meeting is highly creative and different from the originals.
Garma. The school should be like 'Garma', a public ceremonial area for open ceremonies which everyone can participate in and enjoy. 'Educationally Garma means the open forum where people can talk and share their ideas, differences can be talked through, and everyone can work to reach agreement' (p. 13).
Galtha. A place where people from different territories assemble to make important negotiations, agreements and plans, Galtha is also used as a word for the process of meeting and negotiating. So in education, Galtha is 'the nexus between plan and action, theory and practice' (p. 14).

When Ganma takes place in the learning of mathematics, for example, work must be done to understand and compare the two knowledge systems underlying Western and Aboriginal mathematics. 'Part of the work of maths education, then, is fostering the ongoing development of a collective definition of exactly what maths is, and what does it help us achieve, and how, and just as importantly, what does it not help us achieve' (p. 15). Literacy education becomes a collective process in which writing takes on a more important role than reading, and 'learning produces the text, rather than texts producing learning' (p, 16). Books are made use of only as one kind of text among many other including journal writings, diagrams, photos, plant specimens, wall charts, videos, bark paintings. Christie admits that this was a humbling lesson to people like him who have spent years researching, writing, illustrating, printing and distributing 'hundreds of introductory readers in various languages which twenty years later continue to lie almost untouched on the shelf' (p. 16).

A New Teacher Education Approach

The two types of educational change outlined in the last section suggest that the old understandings of education, even of multicultural education, may be evolving in a postcolonial way. When the creativity of teachers and students is freed and nourished by successful implementations of pedagogies such as those involved in the 'New Basics' or in 'Ganma, Galtha and Garma', intercultural modes of knowledge could start to fertilise each other in a way that asserts meaningful challenges to neo-colonialism. Can changes in teacher education institutions prepare teachers adequately for such deep changes in the curriculum,

knowledge systems and pedagogies? and, equally important, how can teacher education institutions themselves initiate further useful change?

The last decade of Australian teacher education has seen an increasing awareness of the importance of preparing teachers for cultural diversity. Yet, recognising the need for this is not the same thing as putting it into practice. Studies have suggested that faculties and schools of teacher education have not necessarily succeeded in providing student teachers with an adequate understanding of cultural issues in education. In a recent research project that I did with a colleague, we found that most universities did not make it compulsory for students to take subjects that prepared them in teaching for cultural diversity, and most students did not choose to take these subjects (Hickling-Hudson and McMeniman, 1996). Teacher education faculties can be as 'culturally problematic' as some schools. The result is that the majority of teachers are likely to continue to perpetuate an Anglocentric curriculum, because that is the only approach in which most have been socialised.

Today things are starting to change in some Australian teacher faculties of teacher education, including that of the Queensland University of Technology where I teach. With support from the education department of the Queensland state government, the entire Bachelor of Education degree is being reconceptualized and redesigned. Traditionally, education for cultural diversity was optional, and not taken by most students. In contrast, in the new degree, a very important innovation is that of requiring an Indigenous Studies subject to be compulsory for all student teachers. A program of studies for this subject has been designed and will be taught from 2003 by a partnership between the university's Faculty of Education and indigenous lecturers in the Oodgeroo Unit (an institution which promotes indigenous studies throughout the university). The subject covers one semester (14 weeks), and all first-year students, usually numbering between 800 and 1000, will be required to take it. This program will not only ask students to study issues relating to Indigenous people in Australia. It will also ask them to investigate the cultural context of Australian society, and their own cultural backgrounds, socialisation and assumptions. The program thus shifts the focus from having Indigenous people explain themselves, to asking students of other ethnicities to reflect on their own cultural assumptions, and then consider this in relation to the Indigenous dimension of Australian society. Students are asked to study the principles that should guide their work when teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and issues in specific school settings including:

- A culturally diverse urban setting which includes some Aboriginal students
- A remote community setting where the majority of families and students are indigenous
- A community consisting mainly of professional families, where the majority of students are not indigenous.

The indigenous studies subject described above is taken by students in the first year of a four year degree. The degree course is built around a set of Teacher Practitioner Attributes and central to these are a set of outcomes that will demand all students to present evidence that their practices are culturally responsive and inclusive. The faculty is currently reviewing all programs to ensure that these attributes are developmentally embedded in all Teaching and Learning, Field Studies and Curriculum units. It hopes to offer elective pathways allowing students to opt to do one elective subject or a suite of subjects in an Indigenous pathway or an Inclusivity pathway. There is scope for staff to develop a futures pathway if deemed desirable. This would go some way towards helping student teachers to develop the broad intercultural skills necessary to prepare them for teaching in a society where the goal is for over 100 ethnic groups to strive to live according to ideals of 'civic duty, cultural respect, social equity and productive diversity' (National Multicultural Advisory Council, 1999, p. 9).

The launching of a compulsory indigenous studies subject is a start, and could hopefully be part of the foundation for a developing a more postcolonial orientation to Australian teacher

education. But teacher education is still not offering an internationalised curriculum. It has not yet met the challenge of global education, which bids teachers to help the young understand why the world is still so 'beset by struggles of ethnic nationalism, hardening of racial lines, and staggering divides between wealth and poverty' (Willinsky 1998: 1), and what can be done to challenge and change this. Teacher educators could do well to join schools in accepting guidelines (Curriculum Corporation 2002, p. 10) for teaching global perspectives by integrating these vital themes of study across the curriculum:

- One world: globalisation, interdependence, sustainable futures
- Identity and cultural diversity
- Dimensions of change
- Social justice and human rights
- Peace building and conflict

Conclusion

This paper has cited a range of research in Australian education to illustrate how practices of culturally proactive schooling provide an alternative to the racist and ethnocentric practices of culturally problematic schools. Challenges to the monocultural thrust of neo-colonial education are evident in the critical multicultural curriculum, the teaching of a diversity of languages including non-European ones, and committed school-community interaction. Such practices help to decolonise the school. Postcolonial challenges are extended by trends towards intercultural pedagogies and interdisciplinary assessment tasks such as those in Education Queensland's new model of schooling, and are even further extended by ideas of the complete restructuring of the traditional school, as suggested by the Aboriginal example. Postcolonial teaching involves helping students to identify and critique the different 'regimes of truth' that characterise our social arrangements, and to build positive identities that move easily between the local and the global. Changes in the pre-service and in-service education of teachers are necessary to underpin this kind of educational transformation. Research into these educational trends in Australia illustrate the importance of the dialogue between research and practice, and could influence ideas on how to restructure education to promote intercultural cooperation in a globalising world.

REFERENCES

Arnold, Lynn (1997) 'Breaking through the tyranny of monoculturalism and monolingualism: the Australian experience.' In R. Watts and J. Smolicz (eds) *Cultural Democracy and Ethnic Pluralism: Multicultural and Multilingual Policies in Education,* Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp. 185 – 213.

Aviram, Aaron (1996) 'The decline of the modern paradigm in education.' *International Review of Education* Vol. 42 No. 5, pp. 421 - 443.

AustStats (1999a) 4704.0: The Health and Welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. (Accessed 19 June 2001) http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/NT00003B36

AusStats (1999b) Educational Attainment (Accessed 19 June 2001) http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/ABS…3677eca2569de002539f4!OpenDocument

Bennett, Christine (2001) Genres of Research in Multicultural Education. *Review of Educational Research,* Vol. 71 No. 2, pp. 171-217.

Cheah, Pheng and Bruce Robbins (eds., 1998) *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation.* Minneapolis Press: University of Minnesota

Christie, Michael (2000) Galtha: the application of Aboriginal philosophy to school learning. *New Horizons in Education*, No.103, November, pp. 3 - 19.

Crowley, Vicki (1999) Towards a postcolonial curriculum for the new millennium. In B. Johnson and A. Reid (Eds.) *Contesting the Curriculum.* Katoomba, NSW: Social Science Press, pp. 100 – 111.

Curriculum Corporation (2002) *Global Perspectives: a statement on global education for Australian schools.* Carlton South, Victoria: Curriculum Corporation.

Curriculum Implementation Unit, Education Queensland (2002) *A Guide to Productive Pedagogies: Classroom Reflection Manual.* Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education.

Education Queensland (2002) The *New Basics Project*, http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics, Accessed 10 October 2002.

Ellyard, Peter (1999) *Ideas for the new millennium.* Carlton South, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Four Corners, The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2002) *Leaving Tennat Creek.* Television documentary, 24 October 2002.

Henry, Miriam (2000) 'It's all up to the individual, isn't it? Meritocratic practices'. In D. Meadmore et al, *Practising education: social and cultural perspectives.* Riverwood, NSW: Prentice Hall, pp 47 – 58.

Hart, Victor and Philomena Downie (2000) Aboriginal owned schools: still an exotic novelty on the Australian education landscape. *New Horizons in Education*, No.102, June, pp. 15 – 29.

Heitmeyer, Deidre (2001) 'The issue is not black and white: Aboriginality and education.' In J. Allen (ed.) *Sociology of Education: Possibilities and Practices.* Katoomba, NSW: Social Science Press, pp. 211 – 232.

Hickling-Hudson, Anne (1999) 'Globalisation, postcolonialism and educational change', in D. Meadmore et al, *Understanding Education: contexts and agendas for the new millennium.* Australia: Prentice Hall.

Hickling-Hudson, Anne (in press 2002) 'Re-visioning from the inside: getting under the skin of the World Bank's Education Sector Strategy.' *International Journal of Educational Development*, Issue 5, 2002.

Hickling-Hudson, Anne and Roberta Ahlquist (in press 2003) **'**Contesting the curriculum in the schooling of indigenous children in Australia and the USA: from Eurocentrism to culturally powerful pedagogies.' Forthcoming in *Comparative Education Review*

Hickling Hudson, Anne, and Marilyn McMeniman (1996) 'Pluralism and Australian Teacher Education: A Case to Answer?' in Maurice Craft (ed.) *Teacher Education in Plural Societies.* London: Falmer Press.

Jupp, James (2002) *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, its People and Their Origins*, Cambridge University Press, quoted by George Megalogenis in 'What makes up the sum of us'. *The Weekend Australian*, 4-5 May, 2002, p 24.

Kalantzis, Mary and Bob Cope (1990) *Cultures of schooling: pedagogies for cultural difference and social access.* London: Falmer Press.

Ladwig, James (2000) 'World Institutions, world dispositions: curriculum in the world-cultural institution of schooling.' In Ram Mahalingam and Cameron McCarthy, *Multicultural Curriculum: New directions for Social Theory, Practice and Policy.* New York: Routledge.

Lingard, Bob, Martin Mills and Debra Hayes (2000) Teachers, school reform and social justice: challenging research and practice. Australian Educational Research, Vol 27 No. 3, pp. 99 – 116.

Luke, Allan (1999) 'Framework: state of the whiteboard'. *Education Views*, Vol. 8 No. 18, October 1, p.2

Luke, Allan, Annette Woods, Ray Land, Mark Bahr and Margaret McFarlane (2002) *Accountability, Inclusive Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting.* Research Report prepared for the Indigenous Education Consultative Body. Brisbane: The School of Education, University of Queensland.

Malin, Merridy (1990) The visibility and invisibility of Aboriginal Students in urban classrooms. *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol 34 No. 3, pp. 318 - 326.

MCEETYA Task Force on Indigenous Education (2001) *Education of teachers of indigenous students in early childhood services and schools. Discussion Paper.* Carlton, Victoria: Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).
URL: http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mctyapdf/educationofteacherinecs.pdf

National Multicultural Advisory Council (1999) *Australian multiculturalism for a new century: towards inclusiveness.* Executive Summary. Canberra: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia.
Full Report: http://www.iimi.gov.au

Ninnes, Peter (2001) 'Representations of ways of knowing in junior high school Science texts used in Australia'. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education,* Vol 22 No.1, pp. 81 – 94.

Ninnes, Peter (2000) Addressing racism in education: school, classroom and community strategies. In TW Maxwell and P. Ninnes, *The Context of Teaching*, Armidale NSW: Kardoorair Press Inc.

Noble, Greg and Scott Poynting (1999) 'Multicultural education and intercultural understanding: ethnicity, culture and schooling.' In S. Dinham and C. Scott, *Teaching in Context.* Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, pp. 56-81.

Office of Multicultural Affairs (Dept of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (1989) *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia: Sharing Our Future.* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Partington, Gary (2001) 'When two worlds meet: ethnicity and education in Australia.' In J. Allen (ed.) *Sociology of Education: Possibilities and Practices.* Katoomba, NSW: Social Science Press, pp. 183-210.

Perera, Suvendrini, and Joseph Pugliese (1998) A school for racism: pedagogy in the face of ethnicity. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education.* Vol 19, No. 2, pp. 157 – 170.

Sachs, Judyth, and Millicent Poole (1989) Multicultural education policies in Australia and Britain: social transformation or status quo? *Education and Society,* Vol 7, No. 1, pp. 9 – 19.

Sheridan, Greg (2002) 'Paradise Lost', *The Australian* 10 May 2002: 10-11.

Singh, Michael (1995) 'Multiculturalism, policy and teaching' in E. Hatton (ed) *Understanding teaching: curriculum and the social context of schooling.* Sydney: Harcourt Brace, pp. 293 – 203.

Singh, Michael (2000) 'Changing uses of multiculturalism: Asian-Australian engagement with white Australia politics.' *Australian Educational Researcher* Vol. 27 No. 1, April.

Singh, Michael (……) 'The centenary of Federation: learning from past mistakes to prevent future wrongs*' Teacher Learning Network* pp. 3-6.

Singh, Parlo (1997) 'On speaking as an "Asian" teacher'. *Education Links,* No. 54, pp. 11-15.

Smolicz, Jerzy (1997) 'In search of a multicultural nation: the case of Asutralia from an international perspective'. In R. Watts and J. Smolicz (eds) *Cultural Democrac and Ethnic Pluralism: Multicultural and Multilingual Policies in Education,* Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp. 51- 77.

Cockburn, Robert (1994) The School of Babel – Tempe High Languages School. Videorecording, *The Cutting Edge*, Special Broadcasting Service (SBS-TV), Australia.

Tait, Gordon (2000) 'From the panopticon to the playground: disciplinary practices.' In D. Meadmore et al, *Practising education: social and cultural perspectives.* Riverwood, NSW: Prentice Hall, pp. 7-18.

Taylor, Sandra (2000) ‘Still a problem: gendered schooling practices.’ In D. Meadmore et al, *Practising education: social and cultural perspectives.* Riverwood, NSW: Prentice Hall, pp. 59-72.

Toohey, Paul (2002) ‘Blackbirded’ 1500 km away from home. *The Australian*, 13 August 2002, pp. 1-2.

Willinsky (1999) ‘Curriculum, after culture, race, nation.’ *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education,* Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 89 – 112.

Willinsky, John (1998, p.4) *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire’s End.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Young, Robert (2001) *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Corrections

p. 385, line 23: after (see Hickling-Hudson, 2002). Erase ‘in press’.

p. 387, last line of page: Erase (see Singh: Teacher Learning Network)

p. 388, line 18: after ‘1500km to’ Insert ‘an indigenous-led’ (travel 1500km to an indigenous-led boarding school)

p. 389, line 32: Erase ‘from Mathematics to Music’, replace with ‘in all subject disciplines’

p. 390, line 3: Erase ‘in press’.

p. 391, line 16: after Kalatntzis, add ‘and Cope’. Kalantzis and Cope (1990).

p. 399. Could replace current 2 page section with the following:

Conclusion: the postcolonial turn in multiculturalism.
The two types of educational change outlined in the last section suggest that the old understandings of education, even of multicultural education, may be evolving in a postcolonial way. When the creativity of teachers and students is freed and nourished by successful implementations of pedagogies such as those involved in the ‘New Basics’ or in ‘Ganma, Galtha and Garma’, intercultural modes of knowledge could start to fertilise each other in a way that asserts meaningful challenges to neo-colonialism. Clearly, significant changes in teacher education would be needed to prepare teachers adequately for such deep changes in the curriculum, knowledge systems and pedagogies. Of equal importance, teacher education institutions should themselves be initiating further intercultural change.

This paper has cited a range of research in Australian education to illustrate how practices of culturally proactive schooling provide an alternative to the racist and ethnocentric practices of culturally problematic schools. Challenges to the monocultural thrust of neo-colonial education are evident in the critical multicultural curriculum, the teaching of a diversity of languages including non-European ones, and committed school-community interaction. Such practices help to decolonise the school. Postcolonial challenges are extended by trends towards intercultural pedagogies and interdisciplinary assessment tasks such as those in Education Queensland’s new model of schooling, and are even further extended by ideas of the complete restructuring of the traditional school, as suggested by the Aboriginal example. Postcolonial teaching involves helping students to identify and critique the different ‘regimes of truth’ that characterise our social arrangements, and to build positive identities that move easily between the local and the global. Research into these educational trends in Australia illustrate the importance of the dialogue between research and practice, and could influence ideas on how to restructure education to promote positive cultural interaction in a globalising world both riven with inter-ethnic conflict and full of intercultural promise.

intercultural cooperation in a globalising world still riven with inter-ethnic conflict.